

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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FOLLOWING REPEAT LENINGRAD 1050 ACTION SECSTATE INFO MOSCOW
12 APR.

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LENINGRAD 01050

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, ET, SO, US, UR
SUBJ: ZNANIYE LECTURE ON SITUATION IN AFRICAN HORN

1. SUMMARY. ZNANIYE SOCIETY DEVOTED SUNDAY LECTURE
APRIL 9 TO SITUATION IN AFRICAN HORN. LARGE AUDIENCE AT
LECTURE (BY DR. OF HISTORICAL SCIENCES, V.C. YAG'YA)
CLEARLY SURPRISED ZNANIYE'S MANAGEMENT. HOWEVER, LECTURE
ITSELF THIN ON FACTS ABOUT CURRENT SITUATION AND WAS
APPARENTLY DESIGNED MAINLY TO PROVIDE GENERALIZED BACK-
GROUND INFORMATION ON HORN TO USUAL AUDIENCE OF MID- AND
LOWER-LEVEL PARTY TYPES. AUDIENCE WAS PREPARED FOR LONG
HAUL IN HORN AND LEFT WITH IMPRESSION THAT SOVIETS ARE
PUTTING THEIR SUPPORT FIRMLY BEHIND ETHIOPIANS AND WILL
BLOCK ANY FURTHER SOMALIAN EFFORT "TERRITORIAL EXPANSION."
HOWEVER, THERE WAS ALSO IMPLICATION THAT SOVIETS ARE
CONTINUING TO HOLD DOOR OPEN TO BARRE. END SUMMARY.
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2. FOLLOWING WERE HIGH POINTS OF LECTURE:

--SUBJECT SEEMS TO HAVE ELICITED MORE INTEREST THAT
ORGANIZERS EXPECTED. LECTURE WAS DELAYED 15 MINUTES AS
GROWING CROWD MOVED TO INCREASINGLY LARGER ROOMS, FINALLY
ENDING UP IN ZNANIYE BUILDING'S GREAT HALL WHICH WAS

NEARLY FILLED. LECTURER'S OPENING REMARK THAT HORN CURRENTLY PRESENTED "DIFFICULT SITUATION" WAS MET WITH SHOUT, "YES, FOR YOU*" BUT AUDIENCE SHOWED NO AGGRESSIVENESS IN FOLLOW-ON Q'S AND A'S.

--MAJORITY OF LECTURE WAS DEVOTED TO ETHIOPIA, WHICH PORTRAYED AS "MAJOR AFRICAN POWER," WITH SOMALIA GIVEN DECIDEDLY LESSER TREATMENT, ALTHOUGH NOD WAS GIVEN TO ITS "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT" LOCATION.

--HISTORIC PORTRAYALS WERE ALONG PREDICTABLE SOVIET CLASS CONFLICT LINES. ETHIOPIA WAS PICTURED AS IN PROCESS OF REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE BUT HAMPERED BY EXTREME POVERTY AND POOR COMMUNICATIONS AND STILL SPLIT INTO WARRING GROUPS ON GEOGRAPHICAL, RACIAL, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC LINES. SOMALIA WAS PORTRAYED AS MORE UNIFIED BUT AIDED IN ITS "FANATICAL NATIONALISM" BY LARGE RESIDUAL ILLITERACY.

--AUDIENCE WAS TOLD THAT, DESPITE WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALIS FROM OGADEN, SITUATION ETHIOPIA REMAINS "EXTREMELY COMPLICATED" AND GRWXLXLT FIGHT IS AHEAD. STATEMENT BY ETHNIC SOMALIS IN OGADEN THAT THEY READY TO FIGHT TO "LAST MAN" WAS HIGHLIGHTED AS WAS LIKELIHOOD OF GROWING STRUGGLE IN ERITREA.

--IT SEEMED TO US THAT SPECIAL CARE WAS TAKEN TO GIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BALANCE TO SOMALIA PRESENTATION. SOMALIA WAS DESCRIBED AS IN THRALL OF FANATIC NATIONALISM AND CONTINUING ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS ON OGADEN, NORTHERN KENYA, AND DJIBOUTI (WHERE IT WAS NOTED LARGE NUMBERS OF SOMALIS LIVE) FOR WHICH IT CONTINUING TO ENLIST AID FROM ANY AVAILABLE SOURCE. TO SUPPORT HIS POSITION SOMALIAN LEADER BARRE IS SAID TO HAVE MADE ALLEGATIONS THAT ETHIOPIA IS AN "IMPERIALISTIC POWER" AND WITH SOVIET HELP EVEN PREPARING AN ATTACK ON SUDAN. HOWEVER, SPEAKER ALSO CREDITED BARRE WITH HAVING GIVEN INITIAL IMPULSE TO "SOCIALISM" IN SOMALIA AND QUOTED BARRE TO EFFECT THAT AS LONG AS HE RETAINS POWER, SOMALIAN "SOCIALIST REVOLUTION" WILL CONTINUE. IMPLICATION WAS THAT SOMALIS LIKELY CONTINUE TO BE TROUBLESOME BUT AUDIENCE SEEMINGLY IS ALSO ALREADY BEING PREPARED TO ACCEPT POSSIBLE SHIFT IN SOVIET POLICY TOWARD BARRE IN FUTURE.

--SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA DESCRIBED IN FAMILIAR TERMS AS "PRINCIPLED POSITION" IN FAVOR OF VICTIM OF AGGRESSION AND AS FULLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH OAU POSITION AGAINST CHANGING AFRICAN BORDERS BY FORCE. SOVIETS WERE CREDITED AS HAVING PRECIPITATED SOVIET-SOMALIA SPLIT BY

REFUSING TO SUPPORT SOMALIAN TERRITORIAL EXPANSION.
AUDIENCE WAS TOLD THAT CUBANS NOW A PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER
OF "REVOLUTIONARY" REGIMES IN AFRICA BUT WAS GIVEN NO
REPEAT NO INDICATION OF EXTENT OF SOVIET OR CUBAN MILITARY
SUPPORT FOR ETHIOPIA, OF USE OF SOVIET MILITARY
ADVISERS OR CUBAN TROOPS IN OGADEN, OR OF CUBAN TROOP
INVOLVEMENT IN ERITREA FIGHTING. MENGISTU'S EARLY APRIL
TRIP TO MOSCOW WAS LAUDED IN PASSING AS "HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL"
BUT NO DETAILS WERE GIVEN ON SOVIET COMMITMENTS.
--US ROLE IN THE AREA DESCRIBED IN TOTALLY NEGATIVE TERMS
AS MAIN SUPPORTER FOR HAILE SELASSIE'S "REACTIONARY
REGIME" AND, AFTER ITS OVERTHROW, AS PRINCIPAL ARMS
SUPPLIER TO SOMALIA. REFERENCES TO U.S. HOWEVER, WERE
INCIDENTAL TO BROADER HISTORICAL DESCRIPTIONS. LECTURER
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MADE NO REFERENCE TO U.S. STATEMENTS ON SOVIET OR CUBAN
MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ETHIOPIA NOR TO
ANY POSSIBLE LINK BETWEEN HORN AND SALT RATIFICATION. RUECKERT
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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